Luxury launches to Elephanta caves, Mumbai

1678. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that luxury launches are taking Indian and foreign tourists to Elephanta caves from the Gateway of India, Mumbai;

(b) if so, whether Government is aware that there is provision for roof-top view from launches at a cost of Rs. ten per head;

(c) whether it is also a fact that nowhere indications are given and moreover no receipt is given for Rs. ten which is highly improper for the foreign tourists;

(d) whether Government would take immediate steps to stop such improper practice to avoid ire from foreign tourists; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) to (e) As per the information obtained from Mumbai Port Trust the fare is same for lower and sun deck (Roof Top). There is no provision to charge extra from passengers to avail sun deck. The Mumbai Port Trust (MBPT) has directed the launch owners to strictly instruct the launch crew to refrain from charging unauthorized fare from the passengers.

Development of rural tourism

1679. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has developed rural tourism sites in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether to encourage the foreign tourists to visit the rural tourism sites any planning or programme has been made;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the plans of the Government to develop more rural tourism sites in the country?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (e) Ministry of Tourism provides Central Financial Assistance to State Governments/UT Administrations for infrastructure development in rural sites having tourism potential under the ongoing scheme of Product/Infrastructure Development for Destination & Circuits. Funds for capacity building are provided through Government of India - United Nations Development Programme Endogenous Tourism Project and the Capacity Building for Service Providers Scheme of the Ministry. Ministry of Tourism has so far sanctioned projects for 136 rural tourism sites in 27 States including 36 sites which United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has supported for capacity building.

Ministry of Tourism promotes and publicises all tourism products including rural tourism sites through collaterals/print/electronic and internet media under the "Incredible India" campaign. Information is also disseminated through the websites *www.incredibleindia.org* and